

October 27, 2005

An Open Letter to Oil Companies:

Energy companies are earning record profits this quarter, therefore, we urge you to act as good corporate citizens and invest earning profits into programs, such as fuel funds, that will provide energy assistance to low-income Americans.

Rising energy prices threaten to financially overwhelm low-income families and seniors this winter. These households will face impossible choices this winter: to heat or to eat. A study by the RAND Corporation found that low-income households reduced food expenditures by roughly the same amount as their increase in fuel expenditures. The Mortgage Bankers Association expects steep energy costs could increase the number of missed payments and lost homes beginning later this year.

Approximately 8.1 million households in the United States use oil for heating. Since the winter heating season of 2001-2002, heating oil prices rose 98 percent for the average family. This winter, prices are expected to rise over 30 percent. Natural gas prices are also expected to soar. This winter, the average family will face a \$1500 natural gas bill, an increase of over \$600 from just last year. For families using propane, prices are projected to hit \$1,427, an increase of \$325. These price increases are overcoming workers' salaries and seniors' Social Security checks. American families need economic relief from high energy prices. They need the security to know they will not have to decide between heating their homes or feeding their families, and paying the energy bill or buying life-saving medicines.

For years, natural gas utilities and their customers have contributed to fuel funds to help reduce the energy burden of low-income families. In 2003, contributions to fuel funds totaled \$68 million. U.S. oil companies' profits for the first nine months of this year increased by more than 35 percent over last year. Contributing just 10-percent of your company's profits to assist low-income families faced with high energy burdens will have a substantial impact this winter.

To keep American households safe and warm this winter, we urge you to invest earning profits into energy assistance programs.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed




Maria Cantwell



Mark Dayton



Barbara A. Mikulski



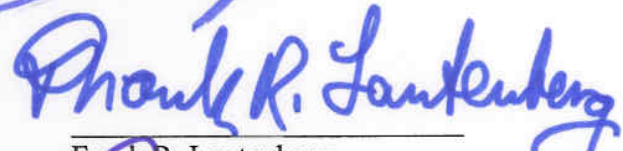
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